

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NEW DE 01251 01 OF 02 271744Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-07 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 IGA-02
DHA-02 SAJ-01 /106 W
-----271808Z 070623 /41

R 271310Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 820
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL MADRAS
USLO PEKING
USCINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 1251

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJ: CONGRESS/COMMUNIST RELATIONS: STEADY
DETERIORATION BUT NOT YET AN OPEN BREAK

BEGIN SUMMARY.

1. RELATIONS BETWEEN MRS GANDHI'S RULING CONGRESS PARTY
AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (CPI) HAVE HAD THEIR
UPS AND DOWNS SINCE THE DAYS OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE. IN
THE RECENT PAST (I.E. SINCE 1969, WHEN THE CONGRESS SPLIT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 01251 01 OF 02 271744Z

OCCURRED), THESE RELATIONS HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY CLOSE;
IF THE TWO PARTIES HAVE NOT BEEN OPEN ALLIES, THEN THEY
HAVE AT LEAST ACTED AS TACIT PARTNERS. SINCE THE EMERGENCY,
HOWEVER, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND THE CPI
HAVE BEEN STEADILY DETERIORATING. EVEN AT THEIR BEST,
CONGRESS/CPI TIES HAVE BEEN LITTLE MORE THAN A "MARRIAGE
OF CONVENIENCE" WHICH MRS GANDHI EMPLOYED AND USED TO HER

OWN ADVANTAGE AT PERIODS WHEN HER OWN POSITION WAS THREATENED (I.E. 1969-71 AND AGAIN 1974-75). A SUBSTANTIAL ELEMENT IN CONGRESS HAS ALWAYS OPPOSED COOPERATION WITH THE CPI AND RESENTED THE INFLUENCE WHICH "LEFTISTS" AND FORMER COMMUNISTS ACQUIRED AT HIGH LEVELS OF THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT. THE BASIC FACTOR IS THAT THE CPI HAS NEVER BEEN A SIGNIFICANT FORCE IN MOST STATES OF THE INDIAN UNION (WITH SEVERAL IMPORTANT EXCEPTIONS), AND GIVEN THE CONTEXT OF CURRENT POWER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE INDIAN POLITY, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS EVIDENTLY DECIDED THAT FOR THE MOST PART SHE CAN DISPENSE WITH COMMUNIST BACKING AT THE MOMENT. HER RECENT ATTACKS ON THE CPI (SEE 76 NEW DELHI 18576) MUST BE VIEWED IN THIS CONTEXT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ABOVE NOTWITHSTANDING, IT MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE CPI DOES HAVE STRENGTH AMONG SOME LABOR GROUPS IN THE INDUSTRIAL CNETERS AND ALSO AMONG CERTAIN RURAL ELEMENTS IN BIHAR. THE CPM'S STRENGTH IS AMONG RURAL, LOW-CASTE GROUPS IN WEST BENGAL AND KERALA. IN ADDITION, TRADITIONAL FACTORS SUCH AS CASTE AFFINITIES BETWEEN LEADERS OF THE CONGRESS AND CPI ORGANIZAIONS IN CERTAIN STATES DO PLAY A PECULIAR AND INCONGRUOUS ROLE IN THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES ON THE STATE AND DISTRICT LEVEL. FOR EXAMPLE, BIHAR'S MAITHIL BRAHMIN CHIEF MINISTER, JAGANNATH MISHRA, HAS CLOSE FAMILY RELATIONS WITH SENIOR CPI LEADERS IN THE STATE, WHILE THE CONGRESS PCC PRESIDENT, SITARAM KESRI, IS A MEMBER OF THE BANIA CASTE. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS, THE EFFECT HAS BEEN THAT THE CHIEF MINISTER HAS BEEN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 01251 01 OF 02 271744Z

FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD AN ELECTORAL "UNDERSTANDING" WITH THE CPI WHILE THE PCC PRESIDENT IS VIRULENTLY OPPOSED TO IT.

3. A MAJOR DIFFICULTY WHICH THE CPI (AND TO A LESSER EXTENT THE CPM) FACES IS THE AGE OF ITS SENIOR LEAAERSHIP AND THE WEAKNESS OF MIDDLE-ECHELON CADRE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN KERALA IT IS CLEAR THAT THE CPI IS HAVING DIFFICULTY IN FINDING SENIOR LEADERS TO REPLACE THOSE WHO ARE CURRENTLY MEMBERS OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT IN THE STATE AND WHO ARE ILL. MEETINGS OF THE CPI'S CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ARE VISIONS OF GERIATRIC COLLAPSE.

4. IN SEVERAL RESPECTS, THE CHASTISEMENT WHICH THE CPI RECEIVED FROM THE HANDSM OFF MRS GANDHI WAS LARGELY BROUGHT ON BY ITS OWN SCHIZOPHRENIC POSTURE TOWARD THE RULING PARTY. THE COMMUNISTS IN THE LAST YEAR INTENSIFIED A POLICY OF "UNITY AND STRUGGLE" VIS A VIS THE CONGRESS AND THE GOI WHICH DICTATED FULSOME SUPPORT FOR CERTAIN

POLICIES AND FORTHRIGHT CRITICISM OF OTHERS. OF THE LATTER, THE CONGRESS AND GOI POLICIES ON WHICH THE CPI CHOSE TO "STRUGGLE" OFTEN COINCIDED WITH PET PROGRAMS OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S YOUNGER SON SANJAY.

5. THIS SCHIZOPHRENIC ATTITUDE ULTIMATELY BACKFIRED ON THE CPI, WHICH GROSSLY MISJUDGED THE POLITICAL SITUATION. THEIR INCREASINGLY DIRECT AND PERSONAL CRITICISM OF SANJAY AND HIS PROGRAMS (ACCURATELY PERCEIVING THE THREAT WHICH HE PRESENTED TO THEIR ALREADY PRECARIOUS POSITION) BROUGHT DOWN UPON THEIR HEADS THE WRATH OF AN OUTRAGED BRAHMIN MOTHER DEFENDING HER SON. BUT OTHER, MORE HARD-HEADED FACTORS ALSO PROBABLY INFLUENCED MRS GANDHI TO LAUNCH HER DECEMBER 23 BROADSHIRE AGAINST THE CPI, THE PRIME ONE BEING THAT THE CPI IS A MINOR POLITICAL FORCE IN MOST OF THE COUNTRY AND THE FACT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE MOST PART DOES NOT NEED THEIR ALWAYS-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 NEW DE 01251 01 OF 02 271744Z

QUESTIONABLE SUPPORT. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, SHE HAS MADE THE POINT THAT EITHER A PARTY SUPPORTS HER IN TOTO OR NOT AT ALL. AT THE GAUHATI AICC SESSION IN LATE NOVEMBER, FOR INTANCE, SHE WARNED: "THEIR (I.E. CPI) STAND THAT THEY WILL SUPPORT INDIRA GANDHI BUT NOT OTHERS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO INDIRA." OTHER TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN HER ANTI-COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE MAY HAVE BEEN THE PRIME MINISTER'S PERCEIVED NEED TO APPEASE THE POWERFUL ANTI-CPI FACTON WITHIN HER OWN PARTY AND THE NEED TO ISLOATE AND HUMBLE THE COMMUNISTS AS SHE PLANNED HER SURPRISE MOVE TO CALL EARLY ELECTIONS TO THE LOK SABHA. BY BOXING THEM INTO A CORNER, THE PRIME MINISTER'S ONSLAUGHT HAS PLACED THEM IN A POSITION WHERE THEY CAN ARRANGE COOPERATIVE "TICKETS" IN THE MARCH ELECTION IN ONLY A COUPLE OF STATES.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NEW DE 01251 02 OF 02 271802Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-07 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 IGA-02

DHA-02 SAJ-01 /106 W

-----271807Z 070843 /41

R 271310Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 821
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL MADRAS
USLO PEKING
USCINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 1251

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. ALTHOUGH THERE IS PRESENTLY A RELATIVE LULL IN HOSTILITIES AND BOTH SIDES HAVE BACK-PEDALED SUFFICIENTLY TO AVOID AN OPEN BREAK, TWO POINTS DO SEEM APPARENT: (1) THE CPI APPEARS INTENT ON CONTINUING ITS SCHIZOID "UNITY AND STRUGGLE" THEME. (W) THE NATURE OF CONGRESS/CPI RELATIONS HAS CHANGED AND WILL BE DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE WHILE SANJAY IS ON THE SCENE. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS CHANGE ARE SEVERAL:

(A) HENCEFORTH AND FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, MRS GANDHI AND THE CONGRESS PARTY ARE LIKELY TO TREAT THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 01251 02 OF 02 271802Z

CPI AS JUST ANOTHER OPPOSITION PARTY, WORTHY OF NO MORE OR NO LESS RESPECT THAN THE OPPONENTS OF THE "RIGHT." AS A RESULT OF THIS AND ALSO OF ITS GENERALLY WEAK OR NON-EXISTENT STANDING IN MOST STATES, THE CPI'S FORTUNES IN THE COMING LOK SABHA POLL APPEAR BLEAK--UNLESS IT MANAGES TO HAMMER OUT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER PARTIES IN CERTAIN SELECTED STATES.

(B) THERE ARE JUST THREE STATES (KERALA, WEST BENGAL AND TO A LESSER DEGREE BIHAR) WHERE THE CPI'S BASE IS STRONG ENOUGH OR SPECIAL FACTORS PREVALENT ENOUGH THAT THE FORTUNES OF THE PARTY ARE INTIMATELY RELATED TO THOSE OF THE CONGRESS. IN THESE STATES, THE PARTY'S FORTUNES ARE LIKELY TO BE DETERMINED NOT SO MUCH BY WHAT IT DOES ITSELF AS BY WHAT THE CONGRESS DOES. IN EACH STATE (AS INDEED IN THE REST OF INDIA) THE CARDS REMAIN FIRMLY

IN MRS GANDHI'S HANDS.

(C) SO FAR, NEITHER THE CPI NOR ITS MORE RADICAL COMMUNIST OFFSHOOT PARTY, THE CPM, SEEM WILLING OR ABLE TO MAKE UP AND JOIN THEIR DIMINISHED RESOURCES. ALTHOUGH THE POSSIBILITY OF JOINT ACTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL REMAINS, PERSONAL AND IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES AT THE TOP APPEAR TO RULE OUT ANY CONJUNCT STRATEGY OR COOPERATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.

(D) DESPITE FEARS EXPRESSED IN SOME QUARTERS, THE POSSIBILITY OF VIOLENCE BETWEEN CONGRESS AND CPI CADRE AS PARTY RELATIONS DETERIORATE AT PRESENT SEEMS REMOTE, ALTHOUGH OF COURSE IT CAN NEVER BE RULED OUT IN CERTAIN "SPECIAL" LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

(E) THE WIDENING GAP BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND THE CPI HAS PRODUCED A FACTIONAL DISPUTE WITHIN THE CPI CAMP ITSELF, WITH ONE GROUP (POSSIBLY UNDER SOVIET PRODDING) ARGUING FOR REPENTANCE AND A RECONCILIATION WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 01251 02 OF 02 271802Z

REALITIES OF THE CURRENT SCENE, AND THE OTHER, MORE RADICAL FACTION ARGUING FOR A COMPLETE BREAK WITH THE FULING PARTY THUS FORCING THE CPI TO STAND ON ITS OWN.

(F) ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE THE SOVIETS HAVE COUNSELED THE CPI TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION WITH THE CONGRESS, IT APPEARS THAT SO FAR THIS ADVICE HAS NOT BEEN HEEDED. THE CURRENT OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE CPI IS PROBABLY NOT REGARDED BY THE SOVIETS AS ENDANGERING THE "SPECIAL" INDO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP IN THE SHORT-RUN AND TO DATE THE RPIME MINISTER'S ATTACK AND SELECTIVE GOI ARRESTS OF COMMUNIST CADRES HAS NOT EXCEEDED SOVIET TOLERANCE. HOWEVER, THE SOVIET COUNSELOR HAS TOLD US THAT IF LARGE NUMBERS OF CPI WORKERS WERE JAILED, THE SOIVETS WOULD RECONSIDER THEIR POSITION VERY CAREFULLY. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE SOVIETS ARE CONCERNED, BUT GIVEN THE NORMALITY OF THE REST OF THE RELATIONWHIP WE THINK THEY WILL FOLLOW A WATCH AND WAIT ATTITUDE. CONSEQUENTLY, THE MOSCOW-NEW DELHI LINK WILL CONTINUE TO FUNCTION MUCH AS IT HAS SINCE THE CONCLUSION OF THE 1971 INDO-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP TREATY. THE SOVIETS APPEAR, HOWEVER GENUINELY UNEASY ABOUT THE LONGER-TERM FFUTURE AND PARTICULARLY THE KIND OF INDO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP WHICH WILL BE VIABLE SHOULD SANJAY'S INFLUENCE WITHIN THE CONGRESS AND GOI BE CONSOLIDATED IN COMING YEARS. THE SOVIETS ARE ALSO UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE "LEFT" FACTION WITHIN THE CONGRESS AND GOI WHICH HAS PROVIDED THE RUSSIANS WITH STRONG FRIENDS AT COURT WITHIN THE CABINET AND PARTY ORGANIZATION IN

RECENT YEARS.

7. A WARM MESSAGE FROM BREZHNEV TO THE CPI PUBLISHED IN THE CPI'S WEEKLY ORGAN "NEW AGE" EARLY IN JANUARY (AT THE HEIGHT OF THE ANTI-CPI CAMPAIGN) EMPHASIZED THE CONTINUING CLOSE LINKS BETWEEN THE CPSU AND CPI. THIS CAN SCARCELY HAVE BEEN WELCOMED BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND REPRESENTED WARMER PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE CPI THAN WE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 NEW DE 01251 02 OF 02 271802Z

HAVE SEEN FOR A LONG TIME FROM THE RUSSIANS. AT THE SAME TIME, SHOULD THE REPORTED VISIT BY SOVIET PRESIDENT PODGORNYY TO DELHI MATERIALIZE IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, THE SOVIETS AND INDIANS WILL HAVE SYMBOLICALLY REAFFIRMED CORDIAL STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS DESPITE PROBLEMS AT THE COMMUNIST PARTY LEVEL. INDEED, THE VISIT OF A KOMSOMOL DELEGATION TO DELHI LAST WEEK AND THE CALL BY THE ORGANIZATION'S FIRST SECRETARY ON SANJAY MAY BE A PLACATING SIGNAL FROM THE INDIANS THAT SANJAY IS NOT HOSTILE TO RUSSIANS AT EITHER A PARTY OR GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL, AS WELL AS A PERHAPS LESS A WELCOME CYNICAL SIGNAL TO THE CPI THAT THE SOVIETS ARE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH SANJAY REGARDLESS OF HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD LOCAL INDIAN COMMUNISTS.
SCHNEIDER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, COMMUNISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NEWDE01251
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770030-0117
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770113/aaaaaktr.tel
Line Count: 307
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bfbf38d0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3485517
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONGRESS/COMMUNIST RELATIONS: STEADY DETERIORATION BUT NOT YET AN OPEN BREAK BEGIN SUMMARY.
TAGS: PINT, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bfbf38d0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009